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THE  
PRESENT STATE AND CONDITION  
OF THE  
FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR,  
OF THE  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
AND  
ADJOINING DISTRICTS, AS EXHIBITED BY THE  
REPORT  
OF A  
COMMITTEE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY  
FOR  
PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, &c.

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**Read First Month (Jan.) 5th, 1838.**

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## INTRODUCTION.



THE PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, desirous of obtaining an accurate knowledge of the condition, resources, and capabilities of improvement of the Colored People of the City and Districts, on the 12th of the First month, 1837, appointed a Committee, consisting of JOSEPH PARRISH, M.D., the President of the Society, ISAAC BARTON, EDWARD NEEDLES, JAMES MOTT, JOSEPH M. TRUMAN, WM. HARNED, DANIEL NEALL, PETER WRIGHT, EDWARD HOPPER, JOSHUA RHOADS, M. D.,\* L. C. GUNN, and ISAAC PARRISH, M. D., to “collect, as far as practicable, and preserve such statistical and other information as will show the present condition of the colored population of this city and districts,” in reference to “Population, value of Real and Personal Estate, amount of Taxes paid by them, state of Education, amount of Pauperism and Crime as compared with the white population, &c. ;” as well as “any other information which the Committee shall acquire and deem useful to the Society.”

The Committee assumed the arduous duty, had frequent meetings, and pursued its investigations with persevering industry. It employed agents to visit every colored family in the city and suburbs, to ascertain the requisite facts as nearly as the nature of the case would admit.

The Committee made the following report to the Society, on the

\*In place of GEORGE PENNOCK, who was unable to serve.

5th of the First month, 1838, and were continued to pursue their investigations; and the following resolution was adopted by the Society:

*Resolved*, That the report be again referred to the Committee, with instructions to make such additions as they deem necessary, and have it printed.

JOSEPH PARRISH, *President*.

JOSHUA RHOADS, *Secretary*.

## To the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.



The Committee appointed by a resolution of the Society, on the 12th of First month, 1837, to collect statistical information as to the present state and condition of the people of color, in the City and adjacent Districts, respectfully

### REPORT:

That, soon after their appointment, the Committee was organized, and commenced the labor assigned to it; and with occasional intermission, continued to perform it up to the present period. Although they found it impracticable, in consequence of the labor and funds it would require, to pursue the investigation to the full extent of the resolution, they have, nevertheless, obtained much useful information upon the most important inquiries proposed by the Society, which they will now proceed to communicate, under distinct heads, for the purpose of more convenient reference. In order that the information sought for should be obtained with as much accuracy as possible, the Committee deemed it advisable to employ agents to visit the colored families residing in the City and Districts; and were fortunate in finding persons whom they believe, from the satisfactory manner in which they have performed their duty, were fully competent, and whose reports may be relied upon. The expense incurred beyond the sum appropriated by the Society, has been provided for by private subscriptions. The information obtained by the agents, relates

#### 1. TO THE NUMBER OF THE COLORED POPULATION.

The Agents report:—

In the City,	2331	families,	containing	8462	individuals.
Northern Liberties,	209	do.	do.	878	do.
Kensington,	86	do.	do.	359	do.
Spring Garden,	136	do.	do.	507	do.
Southwark,	255	do.	do.	931	do.
Moyamensing,	635	do.	do.	2454	do.

Making	3652 families	do.	13591 Individuals,
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Being an average of nearly four individuals to each family.

As the agents were confined in their visits to the houses of the colored population, the above number of individuals is independent of those who may be at service in white families, which may account, to those who refer to the census of 1830, for an apparent decrease; that census allotting to those districts 14,461 colored persons. The Committee, feeling some anxiety to test the accuracy of the numbers reported by the agents, resorted to the following reasoning and calculations on the subject, which to them appear satisfactory and conclusive. By the United States census of 1820, it is stated, that there were in the city and liberties of Philadelphia 10,746 colored persons, of whom 7,646 were then ascertained (by an active member of this Society, since deceased) to be inmates of colored families, and 3,100 residing in other families. The increase of colored persons in this city and districts, between 1820 and 1830, was, according to the last census, about 37 per cent.; at the same ratio, the increase since 1830, for the eight years, would be about 30 per cent., making a total augmentation at the present time of 67 per cent., which will give the total number of persons in colored families 12,768, being but 823 persons less than that ascertained by the agents—a difference so small, under the circumstances, as to afford to the Committee strong evidence of the accuracy of their report.

These data being established, the Committee, in the absence of other means, proceed from them to estimate the number of colored persons at this time not resident in colored families. In 1820, they were ascertained to be 3,100. At the same ratio of increase as in the colored families, from that time to this, they should now amount to 5,177, which, added to those residing in colored families, will give an entire colored population at this time of 18,768.

## 2. REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY.

In 1821, the assessors returned (agreeably to report of the member before referred to,) 229 estates within the city and liberties, belonging to colored persons, and estimated their value at \$112,464. There appears to be no information from which the value of their *personal* property at that time can be ascertained; 1,970 colored persons were then returned, as subject to taxation; whether the tax was imposed and paid the Committee have not learned. Neither have the Committee ascertained what rule the assessors in 1821 adopted in their valuation of property; but supposing it the same then as now, viz. 40 per cent. of the real market value, the actual

worth of the real estate held by colored persons would then have been \$281,162.

The agents have ascertained the real and personal estate of the colored population at this time, to be

	<i>Real.</i>	<i>Personal.</i>
In this City, . . . .	\$241,962	\$505,322
Northern Liberties, . .	26,700	35,539
Kensington, . . . .	2,255	3,825
Spring Garden, . . . .	5,935	21,570
Southwark, . . . .	15,355	26,848
Moyamensing, . . . .	30,325	74,755
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	322,532	667,859
Less incumbrances,	12,906	
	<hr/>	
	309,626	

Making an aggregate of \$977,485, in real and personal property.

This amount must, of course, be received as only an approximation to the truth; for after all, the value of real estate is a matter of opinion, formed upon the best judgment of the persons making it, from the information obtained, and from a knowledge of circumstances affecting the value of property. But the committee have reason to believe that it will be found, from a comparison of facts, to be actually below the true value, rather than above it—for

1. It appears that the above estimate is only \$41,370 more than the value in 1821, as before ascertained; a difference certainly not equal to the advance of property since that period, owing to the gradual improvements of the city, even supposing that the colored population are not in possession of more real estate now than they were then.

2. By a memorial\* of the colored people to the Legislature in 1832, it appears, that by reference to receipts of tax payers, actually produced, they then paid upwards of \$2,500 taxes; which, at the same mode of 40 per cent. of the real market value, would make the capital assessed \$357,000, and upwards.

3. Again, taking the amount of taxes ascertained by the agent to have been paid last year, and finding in the same manner the capital assessed, it would now amount to \$463,040.

4. In the above estimate are not included, fifteen meeting

\* Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, vol. ix. p. 361.

houses, and burial grounds, and a public hall; eleven of which, by the above memorial, were estimated at \$100,000, in 1832; additions have no doubt been made to the other public buildings. The Committee, therefore, feel fully warranted in believing the real estate owned by the colored population to be worth 5 to \$600,000.

In regard to personal property, the Committee have no official documents by which to compare the statements of the agent, which give the amount of \$667,859 divided among 3,652 families, which will average \$183 to each. This estimate embraces not only household furniture, cash on hand, stock money loaned, but all other kinds of personal property; and is confined to those alone who constitute colored families. It is, therefore, believed to be sufficiently moderate, and most probably will fall below the real amount. To this sum must be added some estimate of the personal property of individuals at service in white families, whom we have before set down at 5,177. Although it is true, that many of these possess no property of value, yet it is known that some of them are depositors in savings banks, to the value of several hundred dollars, or have money invested in stock, bearing interest. It is believed entirely safe to estimate this class at \$25 each, which would make the sum of \$129,425 which added to the ascertained amount of those residing in colored families, viz., 667,859

will make a total of \$797,284

It will, therefore, probably not exceed the truth if we consider the amount of personal property owned by these two classes, at \$800,000  
to which add real estate, 550,000

and we have in real and personal property \$1,350,000

### 3. TAXES.

The agent reports these in the

City, at . . . . .	\$2,181 23
Northern Liberties, . . . . .	235 30
Kensington, . . . . .	42 00
Spring Garden, . . . . .	86 70
Southwark, . . . . .	220 25
Moyamensing, . . . . .	481 35
	<hr/>
	\$3,252 83

As this amount corresponds with the taxes paid in 1832,—as ascertained from an actual exhibition of receipts, before referred to, allowing for an increase of the value of property—the Committee consider this item sufficiently correct.

#### 4. HOUSE RENTS, &c.

It appears from the report of the agent, that they pay for

House rent,	.	.	.	.	\$161,008 00
Water rents,	.	.	.	.	464 50
Ground rents,	.	.	.	.	5,491 00

Making a total,	\$166,963 50
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The first item averages about \$44 per family, which appears sufficiently moderate, when the comfortable manner in which many of them live is considered, and making due allowance for the number living in their own houses who pay no rent. To these amounts might properly be added the sums expended by these colored families, in common with other citizens, for the maintenance of their families, which we shall notice hereafter.

#### 5. OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE COLORED POPULATION, AND VIEWS CONNECTED WITH THEIR LABOR AND SUPPORT.

That some portion of them may live in idleness, is admitted, in common with some portion of the whites of the same class; but that a large proportion of them are usefully and industriously employed, cannot be denied. If other evidence were wanting, that furnished by our agents would be sufficient to convince those who have held a different opinion. We here present a catalogue of the employments as furnished by the agents.

Washing,	Bakers,	Brass founders,
Laborers,	Watermen,	Millers,
Biscuit makers,	Brickmakers,	Coopers,
Porters,	Tayloresses,	Plumbers,
Waiters,	Plain sewing,	Bricklayers,
Hatters,	Boarding houses,	Rope makers,
Seamen,	Eating houses,	Oil dealers,
Cooks,	Oyster cellars,	Basket makers,
Dress makers,	Grocers,	Wall colorers,
Coachmen,	Stewards,	Cake bakers,
Seamstresses,	Sweeps,	Barbers and perfumers,
White washers,	Painters,	Well diggers,
Hair dressers & barbers,	Ship carpenters,	Tin plate workers, &c.
Musicians,	Bleeders,	Stablers,
Nurses,	Dentists,	Sextons,

Shoemakers,	Physicians,	Midwives,
Clothes dealers,	Cuppers,	Hair workers,
Carters,	Botanic physicians,	Hackmen,
Hucksters,	Brushmakers,	Butchers,
Oystermen,	Confectioners,	Pastry cooks,
Oakum pickers,	Dealers,	Indian Doctors,
Boot blacks,	White smiths,	Quilters,
Shopkeepers,	Shipping masters,	Boatmen,
Tanners,	Coal heavers,	Wheelwrights,
Blacksmiths,	Silk dyers,	Scythe makers,
Preachers,	Dyers and scourers,	Nail makers,
Carpenters,	Carriers,	Sail makers,
Cabinet makers,	Boot makers,	Stone masons,
Teachers,	Tailors,	Plasterers,
Painters and glaziers.		

From the preceding list, although we are aware that the greater part of them are engaged in the most menial services and severest labors, yet it appears that almost all the branches of business pursued by the whites, are, to a small extent, carried on by them; showing that, under more favorable circumstances, they would be competent to undertake any branch of active industry. But here, as in many other particulars, they are met by the prejudices with which they have to contend, (and of which they complain in their memorial before referred to,) which render it "difficult for them to find places for their sons, as apprentices, to learn mechanical trades."

What the precise value of the labor performed by the colored population amounts to, cannot be determined; yet the following views may enable us to form some approximate estimate of it. If the doctrine be true, that the consumer pays all the expenses of the material, fabrication, and transportation of the article consumed—then must he who occupies a rented house pay to his landlord, not only the current expenses, including taxation, but also an interest on the amount of its original cost.

1. It is seen above that the annual rent paid is \$161,000 and it is believed that the average of taxes will be }  
found equal to about 11 per cent. of the ann. rent, } 17,710

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Leaving . . . \$143,290

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Being equal to the interest at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., (which is probably near that paid by the Real Estate occupied by colored persons,) on a capital of \$1,910,533.

2. The amount required for the support, clothing, and other wants (exclusive of house rent,) annually, must be very great.



The cost of each pauper in the alms-house is ascertained to be \$58 24. When, therefore, we consider the known conveniences and comforts enjoyed by many of the colored families, the Committee think they cannot be charged with fixing at too high a rate the expenditures of the 18,768 colored persons at \$65 each, which comparatively small sum would nevertheless produce per year \$1,219,920; and supposing

3. A profit on this sum to those who enjoyed their custom, of 20 per cent., it would yield \$243,984—a sum sufficient to maintain 244 white families, allowing each \$1000 per annum.

4. They contribute further to the general wealth by the profit which each employer gains upon their labor; as no man employs another, unless he can render that labor profitable to himself.

These various items, then, taken in the aggregate, form a very considerable amount, and show that this class of our population is of much value to the community.

They contribute annually to the public Treasury—

In taxes and water rent on their own houses,	\$ 3,706	
And in rented houses,	17,710	
	<hr/>	\$21,416

And to the wealth of individuals—

In house rent, exclusive of taxes,	\$143,290	
Family and individual expenditures for food, clothing, education, &c. &c.,	1,219,920	
	<hr/>	\$1,363,210

Making together,	<hr/>	\$1,384,626
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The annual sum contributed by labor of the most useful kind towards the true wealth and strength of the community, and by 18,768 individuals, 254 of whom, it has been ascertained, have paid for their own freedom, or that of their children or relatives, the sum of \$70,733; being an average of \$278 each; and of the number of those who have come here from other States, 273 brought with them money amounting to \$130,626;\* and the whole are possessed of

Real estate, worth	\$550,000	
Personal estate,	\$800,000	
	<hr/>	\$1,350,000

\*Individual cases have come to the knowledge of members of the Committee, which justify them in the belief that these amounts are not overrated.

Upon the subjects of Pauperism and of Crime, in respect to which we hear such severe denunciations of the colored people, as being that class of persons which fill our alms-houses and jails, and are therefore considered to be an oppressive burden upon the community, your Committee will now make a few observations; to wit:

### ON PAUPERISM.

In approaching this part of our subject, we are well aware of the difficulties we have to encounter in obtaining a just estimate of the value of the colored people, as a component part of the community, when the census of the alms-house is made the criterion by which they are to be judged. But when we consider that, owing to the feelings and prejudices of the community, the colored people are almost altogether deprived of the opportunity of bringing up their children to mechanical employments, to commercial business, or other more lucrative occupations, whereby so many of our white laborers are enabled to rise above the drudgery in which they commence their career in life, and in turn, to become the patrons of their younger or less fortunate fellow citizens; it is not matter of surprise that a considerable number of them should be dependant on public support.

Under these circumstances it certainly cannot be considered unreasonable that in a gross population of 1,673 individuals in our alms-house, (on the 30th of Twelfth month, 1837,) there should be found 235 people of color, being about one-seventh part of the whole.

Upon strict investigation, founded upon official documents, it will appear that out of 106 men and boys in the house at the date above mentioned, there were

Affected with lunacy, paralysis, blindness, and idiocy,	}	16
diseases which may be referred to no act of theirs,		
Cripples, frost-bitten, and other diseases, the effects of	}	11
exposure, . . . . .		
Cases of consumption and rheumatism, from exposure,		9
Ill of pleurisy, typhus fever, &c. . . . .		12
Destitute boys, . . . . .		5
Destitute old men, . . . . .		8
Properly paupers, . . . . .		32
Not classed, . . . . .		13

From the same source, it appears that there were at the same date, 129 colored females; amongst whom are

Affected with lunacy, insanity, and old age, . . .	23
Lame, . . . . .	2
Blind, . . . . .	3
Idiots, . . . . .	2
Deaf and dumb, . . . . .	1
Lying-in women, children, and orphans, . . .	24
Affected with sickness and debility of various kinds, . . .	32
Not classed, . . . . .	7
May be considered as real paupers, . . . . .	35
	<hr/>
	129
	<hr/>

In regard to age, there were of the men and boys—

Under age, . . . . .	18
Between 21 and 50, . . . . .	57
50 “ 75, . . . . .	18
	<hr/>
	93

Of the females—under age, . . . . .	33
Between 18 and 40, . . . . .	59
40 “ 50, . . . . .	9
50 “ 60, . . . . .	8
60 “ 70, . . . . .	6
70 “ 80, . . . . .	2
Above 100, . . . . .	2
Not classed, . . . . .	10
	<hr/>
	129
	<hr/>

In respect to the employments of the males—

Denominated laborers, . . . . .	44
Having no trade, (of course they are also laborers or job workers), . . . . .	29
Engaged in various occupations or trades, . . .	20
Not classed, . . . . .	13

From the foregoing facts are deduced the previous argument, that according to their grade in society, and their manner of occupation, it would be reasonable to expect a large proportion of their numbers would require pecuniary support.

With regard to the habits of the colored portion of the resi-

dents of the Alms-house, the documents furnish the following classification, viz.:

Of the males, set down as temperate, (besides 13 lunatics and 5 boys),	. . . . .	25
Moderately temperate,	. . . . .	18
Intemperate,	. . . . .	32
Not classed,	. . . . .	13
		—
		88
		—
Of the females, marked as temperate,	. . . . .	68
Moderately temperate,	. . . . .	25
Intemperate,	. . . . .	29
Not classed,	. . . . .	7
		—
		129

From these statements, derived from official documents, it appears that 93 are classed as temperate, exclusive of 13 lunatics, and 5 boys; being 40 per cent. temperate. 43 are moderately temperate. 81 are intemperate, including those not classed; being nearly one-third of the whole number, and even including the 43 denominated moderate, making 124, will not be quite one-half to be set down as intemperate. Whereas, it is asserted by the Steward, and the fact will, we believe, be admitted by any of the Managers of the house, that of the whole number of paupers admitted, eight-tenths are intemperate; giving to the colored population a decided superiority, with regard to habits, over the rest of the residents of the house. And this character, your Committee think, will be sustained by the observation of disinterested persons in our streets, where it is rather uncommon to meet a colored person intoxicated; while on the other hand, to see a drunken white, is an every day occurrence.

Upon a review of this part of the subject, therefore, the Committee conclude, that, taken in connection as was said before, with their habits and manner of living, the destitution which poverty so often produces, particularly upon females, but more especially upon the poor colored woman, and which is augmented in a terrible ratio by the increase of her family, the difficulty of providing for which must be severely felt, as means of employment are greatly diminished, there is less Pauperism than might reasonably have been expected. These considerations are, to the feeling mind, arguments strongly in

favor of the colored people; and if duly weighed, would satisfy any unprejudiced person, that even without reference to the deductions of the former argument, wherein we have proved that they more than indemnify the community, even in a pecuniary point of view, for all expenses incurred in support of their proportion of the public paupers,—they are, in a moral sense, fully deserving of all the labor bestowed upon them, and of the place they sustain in the estimation of those who appear as their friends and benefactors.

### CRIME.

The Committee, with a view to obtain correct information on this important inquiry, appointed three of their number to visit the Moyamensing prison, and another committee to visit the Eastern Penitentiary, and through the politeness of the officers of those institutions they have been enabled to collect and present the following facts:

#### *Moyamensing Prison.*

From the keeper of the untried department, the following statement was received:—

The whole number of prisoners admitted during the months of January, February, March, July, August, and September, 1837, was						2,005
Of whom were colored males	.	.	.	.	.	395
Do. females,	.	.	.	.	.	342
						— 737
Leaving whites,						1268

Of the 737 colored persons, we have been unable to obtain the ages, as it appears no record is kept of them till after conviction, which we think ought to be done, as the age forms a very interesting feature in all inquiries in relation to crime and prison discipline. The warden of Connecticut prison says, "The maximum inclination to crime appears to be at the age of 25."

The colored persons admitted were charged as follows:

With burglary and larceny,	.	.	.	.	188
With assault and battery, breaches of the peace, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, &c.	.	.	.	.	584

From which it appears that three-fourths of the whole number were committed for trivial offences not involving serious guilt; and we have further ascertained, that not one out of six committed, are returned on the calendar for trial. The Committee is therefore forced to conclude, that a vast number of

the commitments might have been prevented, if a proper degree of prudence and justice on the part of the magistrates and constables were manifested.

It is, perhaps, known to most of the members of the Society, that individuals committed for trivial offences, may be released upon the payment of a small sum of money to the committing magistrate—thus holding out strong inducements to swell the number of commitments for trivial offences, without the slightest probability of their being brought to trial. The Grand Jury of the Court of Quarter Sessions for the county, for June term, 1837, were so satisfied of this fact, that they made it the subject of special presentment in the following words:

“The Jury would also state, that they consider the conduct of many of the magistrates highly reprehensible in permitting very many cases of assault and battery to come before them; if *they* were to use a proper influence, they have it in their power to settle many of them, which would save the county, relieve the court of considerable time, trouble, and expense. The course pursued by many of the magistrates in Southwark and Moyamensing, is truly astonishing; it would seem that they are in the habit of committing individuals, who appear to be almost *pennyless* and *destitute* to prison, on the most frivolous grounds, (merely for the sake of private emolument.”)

Thus it appears that of the colored commitments to the Moyamensing prison, amounting to 737, only about 123 were ever brought to trial; leaving 614 whose incarceration might in all probability have been prevented.

Again—it appears from the report of the superintendent, that 153 were charged with burglary and larceny, whereas, by the calculation of the superintendent, not more than 123 were returned on the calender for trial; leaving 30 discharged before trial—even on criminal charges of importance.

Thus can your Committee readily account for the apparently, large proportion of colored persons, who “fill our prisons”—who, though, perhaps, not wholly free from indiscretions and improper conduct, ascribable in a great measure to their ignorance, yet ought to have been admonished and protected, rather than sent to prison.

The account of the state of the convict department of this prison, was not received, when this report was put to press.

*Eastern Penitentiary.*

It appears, from the report of the clerk of this institution, that for the two years ending October, 1837, there were admitted in all 296 persons, viz.: 179 whites and 117 colored persons, of whom 136 were from this county, viz., 71 white and 65 colored; and that of the 136 cases, 100 were for larceny and burglary; of the former, 39 cases, and of the latter 11, were colored persons.

Of the whole population, the colored offenders form on an average of 7 years, ending 1836, about  $36\frac{3}{10}$  per cent.

The ages of the prisoners are not furnished; but of 337 persons, of both descriptions, admitted from the opening of the penitentiary in 1829, to January 1, 1835, 45 were under 20 years of age.

The mortality, in the last two years, was in the proportion of  $2\frac{3}{10}$  per cent. for the whites, and  $9\frac{4}{10}$  for the colored.

Of the colored portion, on the 30th October last, 21 can read and write; 29 can read only; 67 can neither read nor write.

These are the material facts which your committee have been enabled to collect from this institution. A table in detail accompanies this report, showing the number of each crime committed by both classes. Upon a review of it, we notice that the crimes for which the larger portion of both were confined, are larceny and burglary; and while we regret to see so large a portion of colored persons among them, yet your Committee can trace them, in some considerable degree, to the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed. Besides, the proportion appears somewhat larger, from the circumstance that colored boys are probably included in the two prisons, as we have before noticed, while all white minor offenders are sent to the House of Refuge. It appears that in 1828, when the Refuge was founded, there were 60 boys in the Philadelphia prison, 23 of whom were colored; making a ratio a little more than one-third between the white and colored. At the present time, there are in the Refuge 152 juvenile white delinquents, which ought to be taken into the account, before the relative proportion can be fairly stated. A similar institution, in which colored minors may be separated from old and practised offenders, ought to be established, and there is no doubt similar good effects would flow from it, as have attended the institution for whites.

While upon the subject of crime, your Committee will make

a few reflections upon some of the causes which may tend to the commission of it among the colored population.

1. The prejudices and customs of society exclude them from the enjoyment of many of the advantages which the whites possess for moral and intellectual improvement, and their necessities deprive them, in a great measure, of the time necessary to the acquisition of knowledge. They are, therefore, kept in a state of ignorance; and although suitable provision has been made for the education of their children, yet many cannot avail themselves of it, as their labor must be added to that of the parents for their support.

That ignorance is a very fruitful source of crime, has been very fully demonstrated, by the records of various prisons throughout the United States. We shall make extracts from a very interesting series of communications, published (in the "Register of Pennsylvania,") by Dr. Leiber and others. He remarks, as one of his conclusions, from the facts sent him, "that school education is, with most convicts, very deficient, or entirely wanting. We will furnish some of the statements themselves. The first is from S. R. Wood, of our own penitentiary.

Of 219, 42 can neither read nor write.  
50 can read, but not write.

At Sing Sing, of 842, 170 cannot read or write.  
24 have never been at school.  
85 can read, and not write.

Auburn, of 670, 180 had no education.  
267 very poor do.  
204 common do.  
8 academical do.  
3 collegiate do.

The warden of the Connecticut state prison estimates that

46 in 100 convicts can read and write.  
32 in 100 can read only.  
22 in 100 can neither read nor write.

2. "Intemperance, very often the consequence of loose education, is a most appalling source of crime." In our own penitentiary,

Of 337 convicts, only 80 are set down as sober.  
10 are uncertain.  
247 drunkards, or occasionally intemperate.

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337

The warden of Sing Sing estimates that, "of 842 convicts, 485 have been habitual drunkards; about one-third of that number actually committed their crimes *when intoxicated*."



Auburn State Prison, 503 intemperate.  
 159 temperate drinkers.  
 8 total abstinentes.

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Whole number of convicts, 670, and of these, 402 committed their crimes under the influence of liquor, and 257 had intemperate parents.

The same opinions are confirmed by other reports.

3. The neglect to learn a regular trade, or if apprenticed, abandoning it before the time lawfully expires, is considered as another source of crime. In our own penitentiary,

Of 219, only 30 were regularly bound and served out their time.  
 38 were apprenticed, but ran away.

State Prison, Connecticut, 72 in 100 never learned a trade.  
 24 in 100 began to learn, but did not follow it.  
 4 in 100 have followed regular trades.

4. Early loss of parents is also another source of crime mentioned and confirmed by the reports.

The preceding, the Committee deem sufficient on the subject, as they form the prominent causes, some, or all of which may operate on the colored population, in common with the whites. The next inquiry naturally arises, what can or ought to be done to remove, or at least to remedy the effects of these causes? The Committee will suggest such as occur to them. As ignorance is a prominent cause, the *education* and *instruction* of the rising generation should be faithfully attended to. The time was, when a colored person was supposed to have no capacity for receiving instruction in the most elementary branches of education; but those days have, happily, passed away, and we have numerous living instances amongst us, in preachers of collegiate education; of teachers, well qualified; and scholars in every branch of academic learning. And the Committee are happy to observe, by the agents' report, that the parents of the colored children are disposed to discharge their duty by sending them to school. They report 1724 as attending common schools, and 1987 attending Sunday schools; but they also report 1301 who do not attend common schools, and 974 who do not attend Sabbath schools; whether too young, or too much occupied by the necessities of the parents, is an interesting inquiry.

The next step is to take measures to have all children of suitable ages apprenticed to learn some trade. We have already noticed the complaint made by the colored persons, that they experience great difficulty in finding masters sufficiently free from prejudice to receive their sons as apprentices. In

this important measure, probably the Society could essentially aid, by inducing white masters to receive apprentices. Girls should, likewise, either learn trades, or be apprenticed at service, in conscientious white families.

The next great evil to be removed is *Intemperance*. From what we have already said with regard to the habits of the colored population, we shall not be considered as having an unfavorable opinion of them in this respect. It is a fact, however, that this evil exists among them in a much larger degree than it ought. Every method and argument should be employed to add to the number of the Temperance Societies already established, and induce members to join them, and if possible break up those infamous sinks of iniquity, the "grog-shops," which so much abound in the southern districts of the city.

Above all, the moral and religious instruction of the rising generation, and of those more advanced in life, should be attended to by the erection of necessary meeting houses and the institution of Sabbath-schools. The Committee are gratified to state an increasing desire among the colored population on this subject, as evinced by the numerous places of worship which they have already erected, and which consist at present of — Methodist, — Presbyterian, — Episcopalian, — Baptist, making together —; as also in the institution of — Bible Societies, — Tract Societies, — Temperance Societies, — Female Literary Institutions, and — Libraries.

The Committee will close this part of their report by making one other suggestion, which may, perhaps, deserve the consideration of the Society; and that is, how far the congregated residence of the colored population in one entire portion of the city, may injuriously affect their interests. We all know the powerful influence of association, whether for good or for evil. Does it not tend to strengthen the influence of bad example, especially upon the young—embolden vice, and continue prejudices against them which might be removed, by scattering themselves more among the neighborhoods of the whites, from whom they would gradually derive important hints on the science of living; and even place themselves in the way of being employed by them, in various modes which do not at present occur? We are aware that many difficulties may at first present themselves; but may they not be gradually removed?

All which is respectfully submitted.

JOSEPH PARRISH, M. D., *Chairman*.

EDWARD NEEDLES, *Secretary of the Committee*.

## SECOND REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE TO VISIT THE COLORED PEOPLE, &c. &c.

TO THE SOCIETY. Read Fourth month 4th, 1838.

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IN their former Report, your Committee presented a body of statistical information, tending to develope the present condition of the colored community as it relates to numbers, the value of real and personal property, amount of taxes paid toward the support of their poor, &c., together with facts and observations on the subjects of pauperism and crime. As so many charges have been made against this injured people on the latter head, your Committee will very briefly recapitulate several views adopted in their former Report. They think they have shown, from accurate data, that in respect to pauperism, the general impression which has prevailed is entirely erroneous. As it relates to crime, they believe unjust impressions also prevail. In estimating the moral condition of a mass of individuals, it will not be denied that the state of education amongst them, the character of their employments, and the condition from which they have sprung, should be taken into the account. Considering, therefore, that the great body of this people are of the laboring class, that they have been brought up in poverty and ignorance, that many of them have been held as slaves, or, in other words, as "chattels personal to all intents and purposes whatsoever," thus being debarred from the exercise of their moral and intellectual faculties, and held in perfect subordination to the despotic control of a fellow creature, it is not surprising that many of them should indulge in vicious propensities, and become the subjects of criminal prosecution; a state of things which is rather to be referred to the condition in which they have been placed, than to any inherent defect in themselves. And it is on this account, that those who profess to be the friends of this afflicted and neglected part of the human family, should be aroused to increased exertions on their behalf, and to a more

serious inquiry how far they are acquitting themselves in all truth and sincerity, in the position of abolitionists, a term which comprises, in relation to this people, the performance of all those acts of Christian charity which make up the character of a philanthropist.

Since the last meeting of the Society, your Committee have been anxiously engaged in watching over the rights and interests of our colored brethren, more particularly with reference to the movements of the late Convention assembled in this city for revising the Constitution of Pennsylvania.

It is not necessary to embody in this Report the details of the exciting discussions which arose in the Convention, on the motion for the introduction of the word "white" in the article of the Constitution relating to the right of suffrage; and on a proposed amendment to secure to fugitives from labor the right of jury trial; these were witnessed by many members of the Society, and their result is known to all. Your Committee need only state, that they were active in adopting such measures as were within their power to avert a decision of these questions, injurious to the interest of our colored population, and so derogatory to the character of our state. A number of the copies of our first Report were distributed amongst the members of the Convention, and individuals of the Committee were vigilant in furnishing to the friends of human rights, in the Convention, such information as might have a favorable bearing on the questions at issue. And although prejudice and error prevailed, yet your Committee trust that their labors were not altogether in vain. And as strongly corroborative of the estimate we have placed upon the general good character of the colored people, and confirmatory of the sentiments advanced in our former Report, when treating upon the subject of crime, we cannot refrain from introducing an extract from some remarks published in the *Colonization Herald*, as having been made in the Senate of Pennsylvania, on the resolution relative to the right of petition, by Jesse R. Burden, the decided and uniform opposer of the course of abolitionists, and denunciator of their measures. He proceeds to ask the question,

"What has resulted from the agitation of the question of slavery?"

To which he answers:

"Before the cause was taken up with so much zeal, the colored people in Pennsylvania were gradually elevating their standard of character. They

had among them men who merited and received the regard and respect of the community. Among these we would name James Forten, of Philadelphia. This man had served with honor in the revolution: in all the relations of life his reputation has been spotless. Such men had exercised an immense and useful influence on the colored population. With the exception of two or three counties in the state, colored men were permitted, without question, to give their suffrages for state and town officers. Their deportment was gradually and silently overcoming the prejudices against them; a few more years and the privilege of voting would have been tacitly conceded to them. He spoke of their deportment, because he conceived that on this point injustice had been done to the race, by friends and foes. He said that although he had never served in an office of profit, he had served in his county in nearly all those which are called offices of honor; that as inspector of the prison, and guardian of the poor, he had possessed opportunities of knowing the condition of the colored population. From the very few who asked pauper relief, he judged they were provident and industrious. In the prisons they were numerous, their offences seldom of a high grade, generally those incident to poverty. The number of commitments was in a great measure to be accounted for from prejudice against their color, and from want of friends. Our Pennsylvania system of "squires" looks less to the satisfaction of justice, than to the satisfaction of the justice's pocket—obedience to the laws is starvation to the magistrate—his interest is made to consist in having the laws broken, or in committing men under color of law. He will discharge a white man from prison because a few dollars can be raised among his friends; the colored man, for want of funds, remains in prison until term time.

He said he had never known an instance of a colored person using disrespectful language to a white man, when spoken to in the manner which a gentleman ought to speak. He believed that the conduct of the colored people had been as good as any person had a right to expect, considering the circumstances under which they were placed."

Although such are the sentiments of many of the intelligent amongst us, yet such is the false estimate which still prevails amongst the mass of our citizens, as to the value of the colored people as a component part of the community, and which was particularly manifest in the debates of the Convention, that we are renewedly convinced of the utility of the plan of laying before the public statistical information as to their actual condition. We have, therefore, steadily pursued our investigations; the result of our labors is the acquisition of a body of additional facts, which we will now proceed to exhibit to the Society. Our inquiries have been directed to the beneficial societies amongst the colored people, for mutual assistance in times of sickness, &c.; to their schools and literary societies; the state of morals amongst them; the number of their houses of worship; of members constituting their respective congregations, and the religious sects to which they severally belong; and,

lastly, the mortality among them in comparison with the white population.

These important items of information, we shall treat under their appropriate heads. Before proceeding to which, however, we may state that, after the decision of the Convention adverse to the exercise of the elective franchise by the colored people, the Committee being sensible of the depth of their afflictions, an address was prepared, expressive of our sympathy with them on this occasion, and extending such counsel to them as the circumstances seemed to require. Which was read in all their churches and extensively circulated amongst them, and from the manner in which it was received we are satisfied that it has been of signal service, in calming the tumult of feeling which so strongly existed amongst them.

### 1. BENEFICIAL SOCIETIES.

These institutions, as their name imports, are established for the purpose of mutual aid and assistance in times of sickness and distress, and have a powerful influence in preventing pauperism and crime, and in fostering those feelings of mutual regard and sympathy, so essential to the harmony and well being of society. As will be seen by the subjoined tabular statement, these societies are very numerous amongst the colored people, and the manner in which they are conducted reflects great credit upon their supporters.

The following preamble to one of these institutions, supported by females, exhibits, in a few expressive words, the chief objects of all of them:

“WE, the subscribers, duly reflecting on the various vicissitudes of life to which the female part of the community are continually exposed, and stimulated by the desire of improving our condition, do conclude that the most efficient method of securing ourselves from the extreme exigencies to which we are liable to be reduced, is by uniting ourselves in a body for the purpose of raising a fund for the relief of its members. With this view we have formed ourselves into a Society, that by our mutual endeavors, we may relieve the occasional distress of each other, and jointly agree to the following terms as the articles of our Constitution.”

The fund appropriated for the relief of distressed members, is raised by a monthly contribution from each of them, from twelve and a half to twenty five cents, or more. The aid is

furnished through a committee, who investigate the condition of the applicant, and act accordingly.

If a member dies, he or she is buried in a becoming manner, at the expense of the society. If the widow of a deceased member be sick, or in want, and if she be worthy, the aid of the Society is extended to her so long as she remains a widow and is in distress; and if the widow marry, it becomes a duty of the Society to exercise a care over the children, and if they need assistance, to furnish it. If a member has been guilty of immoral conduct, he or she may be expelled, provided that the accused party have a hearing and trial before the Society. If the sickness of a member arises from immoral or vicious conduct, he or she is debarred from the benefits of the charitable fund. The tendency of such organizations in promoting industry, providence, and charitable dispositions, and in affording a check to the indulgence of vicious propensities, is too obvious to need illustration; and the small number of paupers in our alms-house, as exhibited in the former Report, attests their importance in this respect. And we have been informed on good authority, that scarcely an instance of conviction upon a criminal charge of a member of one of these numerous societies, has occurred for a period of many years. These institutions are generally incorporated, and some of them are possessed of a considerable amount of money, as the annexed table will exhibit.

## BENEFICIAL SOCIETIES.

NAME.	Instituted.	No of Mem- bers.	Annual sub- scription for 1837.	Annual ex- penditures for 1837.	Have in fund.
1. Male Garrison Association.		47	\$130	\$131	
2. Humane Mechanics' Society.	1827	65	195	100	
3. Sons of St. Thomas.	1829	48	103	52	\$600
4. Citizen Sons of Philadelphia.	1830	80	254	140	880*
5. Female Macedonian Society.	1824	230	682	549	
6. United Benev. Daugh. of Tillghman.	1835	36	69	25	
7. Dorcas Society.†	1830	72	108		
8. Daughters of Jerusalem.		34	123	120	
9. Rising Perseverance Free Sons of } Thomson.	1836	240	693	424	
10. Brotherly Union.	1823	234	782	684	
11. United Brethren.	1828	177	559	551	800
12. Benev. Daughters of Jos. M. Corr.	1825	150	350	400	
13. Union Daughters of Walter Proctor.	1836	128	550	450	
14. United Daughters of Allen.	1833	139	240	200	
15. Beneficial Daughters of M. Brown.		66	111		
16. Sisterly Union.		134	200	150	
17. Female Harrison Society.	1834	85	132	85	
18. Benevolent Daughters of Atlee.	1836	100	400	300	
19. Coachman's Benevolent Society.	1825	60	182	172	
20. African Porter's Benevolent Society.	1828	112	382	297	
21. Friendly Sons of Zion.	1823	58	200	175	
22. Union Sons of Industry.		55	135	122	
23. Male Harrison Benevolent Society.		25	58	41	
24. Clarkson Society.	1828	90	156	97	400
25. United Sons of Allen.	1835	103	309	370	
26. Benevolent Daughters of Union.		100	150	100	
27. United Daughters of Wilberforce.	1831	99	170	154	
28. Friendly Daughters of Nehemiah.		130	257	195	
29. Female Simeon.		78	155	133	
30. Daughters of St. Paul.		135	350	130	450
31. United Daughters of Hester.		80	164	114	200
32. Female Benezet.		83		225	500
33. Female Beneficial Harmony.	1832	63	223	171	390
34. Union Sons of Bethel and Union Ch.		34	123	79	
35. United Daughters of Bethlehem, } City and County of Philada. }	1835	125	252	330	100
36. Female Baptist Assistance Socie- } ty of Pennsylvania. }	1824	59	80	113	150
37. Female African Benev. Society.	1827	54	96	96	
38. Daughters of Isaiah, City and } County of Philadelphia. }	1831	54	75	86	
Carried over.		3662	9198	7561	4470

\* \$700 of this sum for share of Hall.

† For distributing garments to sick and infirm.



## BENEFICIAL SOCIETIES.

NAME.	Instituted.	No. of Mem- bers.	Annual sub- scription for 1837.	Annual ex- penditures for 1837.	Have in fund.
Brought over,		3662	\$9198	\$7561	\$4170
39. Methodist Assistant.		50	75	30	
40. Female Thomas Shipley Society.	1836	240	700	254	
41. Female Turpin Society.	1833	147	654	406	
42. Daughters of St. Thomas.		72	52	36	
43. Daughters of Absalom.*	1824	85	197	122	
44. African Female Bond Benevolent Society of Bethel Church. }				225	
45. Daughters of Jeremiah.	1827	125	180	100	350
46. Hopeful Daughters of C. Carr.	1821	70	100	100	70
47. United Daughters of St. Mark.		137			
48. Daughters of Aaron.		100	80	70	50
49. United Sisters' Society.	1830	100	150	175	200
50. Whitesonian Society.	1818	80	150		
51. Young Mens' Rising Beneficial.	1833	38	130		
52. Daughters of Garrison.	1833	90			
53. Fire Side Circle.	1837	50	780	400	
54. Daughters of Hosea.	1824	110	150	120	400
55. Angola Beneficial Association.	1808	40	100		120
56. Benjamin Lundy Society.	1830	45	300	450	400
57. United Sons of Johnson.	1836	213	530	550	
58. Friendly Society.	1795	66	68	79	450
59. United Daughters of Israel.	1827	120	400	200	200
60. Penn Benevolent Society.		73	293	216	
61. Female Granville Society.	1833	100	182	177	
62. Benezet Society.		103			
63. Male African Benevolent Society.	1819	50	400	400	
64. Sons of Africa.	1810	38	95	95	220
65. Daughters of Zion.	1827	80	120	70	
66. Daughters of Salem.		40	50	40	120
67. United Daughters of St. James.	1832	48	87	116	200
68. African Female Union.	1830	50			100
69. Rush Benevolent Society.	1815	60			176
70. African Ark Benevolent Society.	1833	65	275	260	178
71. Female Hand in Hand.	1833	100	150	200	108
72. Wilberforce Association.	1818	100	263	200	150
73. First Perseverance.	1830	198	1089	700	500
74. Benevolent Daughters.	1796	200	780		700
75. Daughters of Tapsico.	1837	163	433	74	356
76. Angolian Society.	1808	40	120	100	120
77. Tyson Benevolent.	1824	100	250	270	250
78. Daughters of Pennsylvania.	1830	40	100	150	101
79. Daughters of Johnson.	1834	60	90	226	34
80. Daughters of Clayton Durham.	1837	100	80		
Total.			7448	18,851	14,172
					10,023

\* All from forty-five to eighty years of age.

It may, perhaps, be stated that in some instances the same individual belongs to two, or even more, societies. The number of members, as exhibited by the summary of the whole, is, at this time, 7,448, and their contributions during the past year amounted to the aggregate sum of \$18,851; of which \$14,172 was expended during the same time for the relief of its members; the surplus being added to the funds previously accumulated, and constituting a resource in case of future deficiency, the necessity of which is manifest from an inspection of the table, where it will be seen that their expenditures sometimes exceed the amount of the contributions.

The names of twenty other societies are reported, which are known to be organized, but we have not been able to procure authentic information of their annual receipts and expenditures, we can therefore only notice the fact of their existence.

## 2. SCHOOLS AND LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

Although, as has been stated in the preliminary observations to this Report, many of the present generation of adult colored people have been brought up without a knowledge of the benefits to be derived from education, yet we are not to be understood as imputing to them any greater degree of indifference in regard to this highly important subject, than is usually exhibited by those of a corresponding class of society amongst the whites. According to the census taken by our agents, there were 3,652 families in the city and districts, comprising 3,025 children of suitable age to attend school, agreeably to the following statement, to wit:

<i>Schools.</i>	<i>Attend.</i>	<i>Do not attend.</i>
Common,	1,724,	1,301,
Sabbath,	1,957,	974.

By recent inquiry we have been highly gratified to find that, besides the large schools, established by the controllers of public schools, there are other institutions for the gratuitous instruction of colored children, in some of which are taught the higher branches of education. There are also a number of private schools amongst them, some of which are conducted in a manner worthy of respectful notice, and afford encouraging proof of an anxiety on the part of our colored people to secure to their children those advantages which many parents can only appreciate by observing upon others the superiority of a cultivated intellect, when viewed in contrast with the ignorance and imbecility of the untutored mind.

We subjoin a tabular statement of the schools for the

instruction of colored children, which will exhibit in a compendious view the proportion of those who are entered for school, to the number who actually attend; this great disparity has long been a source of regret to their friends, and much labor has been bestowed upon them, in order to effect an improvement, which we confidently believe has been attended with some degree of success. But although it is admitted that too much neglect is still attributable to the parents in respect to sending their children to school, we believe it is a fault which all who are conversant with public schools, will acknowledge to be equally chargeable to indigent persons, whether white or colored.

FREE SCHOOLS.	No. on Roll.	No. attending.	No. in rudiments.	Branches Taught.				
				Read.	Read and write.	Cyph. and gram.	Geo. y.	high-er br.
Northern Liberties Public School,	220	84	64	37	15		11	
Lombard Street do., boys,	200	150	80	120	40	60	11	22
Do. do., girls,	263	160	193	70	100	40	30	25
Locust Street Infant School,	120	80	80					
Adelphi, do.,	90	63	63					
Tidmarsh, do.,	82	65	65					
Adelphi, boys,	88	60	15	40	65	28	22	4
Bray's,	12	10	12					
Shelter for Colored Orphans,	41	41	41					
Total,	1116	713	613	267	220	128	74	51

## THE FOLLOWING ARE PART FREE AND PART PAY.

Willing's Alley, boys,	72	45	24	48	44	38		
Do., girls,	82	40	12					
Clarkson, do.,	72	40		65	64	54	3	1
Total,	226	125	36	113	108	92	3	1

## PAY SCHOOLS, UNDER CARE OF WHITE TEACHERS.

Mount Zion Church, Js. Corbet,	17	14	7	6	4			
Elizabeth Street, Abigail Brown,	35	30	20	10	10	10		
Clarkson H. Sch., boys, G. Luther	50	45		50	50	45	45	30
Total,	102	89	27	66	64	55	45	30

## PAY SCHOOLS, TAUGHT BY COLORED TEACHERS.

David Ware,	45	37	20	20	15	9	2	
Solomon Clarkson,	40	40	10	30	30	12		
Susan Powell,	8	8	8	8				
Emeline Brown,	22	22	14	8	1			
Ann Eliza Carey,	30	25	23	7	3		5	
M. and S. Gordon,	30	25	10	20	20	10	10	
Sarah M. Douglass,	43	38	4	40	28	37	21	
Eliza Matthew,	33	33	8	25				
Eliza Ann Rolley,	12	12	1	11	8	8		
Eliza West,	25	20	17	8	1			
Total,	288	260	115	177	106	79	38	

The foregoing list was obtained from the teachers of the different schools; and while it exhibits a brief view of the state of the schools, both public and private, it also affords us a satisfactory proof of the accuracy of our agents' report, by the remarkably near coincidence of the numbers returned by them as entered for school, with the numbers here ascertained to be actually on the books of the different schools. By the former list there appears to be 1,724 at common schools; the latter 1,732, a difference so small as to require no particular notice, only from the fact that, although derived from distinct sources, the amounts agree so nearly.

Besides the number of private schools amongst the colored people, as stated in the concluding part of the foregoing table, they have a number of societies formed for the purpose of mutual improvement, and for exciting in each other a laudable spirit of emulation in respect to literary and intellectual pursuits. The advantages which have resulted from the stimulus afforded by such associations, are exemplified in the attainments of numerous individuals whom we could name, were it necessary or expedient to particularise.

We have obtained partial returns of those societies, and, not to swell our Report, submit the names of the following, to wit:

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Vols. in Lib.</i>	<i>Objects.</i>
Philadelphia Library Company,	150	600	Mutual Improv.
Rush Lib. and Debating Society,	41	132	do.
Minerva Literary Society,	20	50	do.
Phila. Lit. Female Association,	20		do.
Edgworth Society,	30		do.

### 3. OF THE STATE OF MORALS AND CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

These subjects so naturally blend with each other, that we are not disposed to attempt to separate them, for although a partial appearance of morality may sometimes be preserved, independent of religion, yet all agree that religion cannot possibly exist without morality.

It is a fact, too true to be evaded, that a portion of the colored people here, are in a low and degraded condition; but we think, without attempting a comparison, which might appear extremely invidious, we shall be able to show conclusively, by the reports we have received of the state of the

colored churches, that the ratio of that unfortunate class, to the whole number of the colored inhabitants of the city and liberties, is much smaller than is generally supposed.

Agreeably to the very interesting statistics, published in *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, vol. viii., page 70, the whole white population of the city and districts, at the taking of the census for 1830, was 173,345. The number under 20 years of age is stated thus:

Under 5 years,	25,355
from 5 to 10,	21,401
“ 10 to 15,	19,064
“ 15 to 20,	21,652
	<hr/>

Making the minor portion equal to 87,472

The colored population, by the same documents, is estimated at that time as amounting to 15,595.

By the return of our agents, and the estimate founded thereon, as stated in our first Report, the number of colored people in the city and districts in 1837, was

18,768

Which would give by the rule of proportion, with the above stated }  
 numbers under 20 years, viz. : as 173,345 : 87,472 :: 18,768 : }

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9,298

From which deduct the number of communicants as reported }  
 by the pastors, (see next page,) }

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3,995

Leaves 

---

5,303

as the number of adults who may be supposed to be without the pale of church control. But considering the powerful moral influence which a body composed of 3,995 religious church members must have over their non-professing friends and acquaintance in their immediate vicinity, we apprehend it is within the bounds of probability to suppose that, of the 5,303 alluded to, a large number may be so far under the restraints of Christian feelings as to be worthy of being classed amongst the sober and moral part of the community; and we are confirmed in the truth of this theory by the opinion of several clerical and other religious persons who have been consulted on the occasion; leaving but a small proportion of the entire population as the number which is to include the immoral and vicious, and for whose faults such a mass of opprobrious slander has been so lavishly bestowed upon the whole people.

It is probable we may again advert to this subject, when we

come to treat of the mortality amongst the colored people. We will now present the society with a brief notice of the state of their churches, number of actual members, value of the property, &c., as communicated from the records by the pastors of the different congregations, in reply to our inquiries addressed to them with special reference to these subjects, viz.:

DENOMINATION.	Number of churches	Number of communicants.	Annual expenses	Value of property.	Amount of incumbrance.
Episcopalian.	1	100	\$1000	\$36,000	
Lutheran.	1	10	120	3,000	\$1000
Methodist.	8	2860	2100	50,800	5150
Presbyterian.	2	325	1500	20,000	1000
Baptist.	4	700	1300	4,200	
Total,	16	3995	6020	114,000	7150

The value of property, as here stated, is the same as that given us by the pastors of the different congregations. It may be thought by some to be rated too high, but on investigating the subject through the medium of a sub-committee, one of whom was a judicious property broker, a slight difference only was discovered, their report being that the aggregate value of the property may safely be set down at \$100,000 over and above the debts due thereon.

Besides the above, it will be proper to state, that in Hamilton village, in the immediate vicinity of the city, there are two congregations, one of Baptists, with 46 communicants, the other Methodists, with 50. The property is clear, and supposed, at a moderate estimate, worth \$1000.

#### 4. OF MORTALITY.

In relation to this important subject, the inquiries of the Committee were naturally directed to the office of the Board of Health, as the appropriate focus of intelligence of the description required. And it being known to some of the members, that our valuable fellow citizen, Dr. G. Emerson, was not only very conversant with the records of that office, but that, in his essay on the medical statisties of Philadelphia, he had treated upon the mortality amongst the colored people, a note was addressed to him by one of the Committee, requesting to be furnished with such information upon the

subject as might be in his possession. In reply to which a letter was received, containing much interesting matter, and as he has very kindly given permission to make such disposition of it as may appear most expedient, we therefore submit it to the Society as part of this report.

It will be perceived that in this letter Dr. Emerson estimates the number of colored persons, both in 1820 and in 1830, at different sums from those stated by the Committee in their first Report. This difference arises mainly, as suggested by him, from his estimate being founded on the whole district making report of deaths to the Board of Health, and those of the Committee not including a small part of that district which lies beyond the built portions of the city and the adjoining corporations.

In relation to the entire number of the colored population in 1837, the difference between the sums stated by the Committee and by Dr. Emerson, is of importance. The Committee find on a careful examination of the census of 1820 and that of 1830, and of the increase between those periods, that through some inadvertence their estimate of its ratio is erroneous, and that instead of 37 it should be stated at about 30 per centum. This estimate being the basis of the computed increase from 1830 up to 1838, the whole number given by the Committee for that time would consequently be too great. This alteration in the ratio of increase will reduce the whole number of the colored population to about the sum stated by Doctor Emerson.

Although the several calculations in the first part of this Report, founded upon the estimated number of the colored population in 1837, will necessarily be in some degree changed by the alteration of their computed number, yet no difference will be produced in the results, of material importance to the present investigation.

*Philadelphia, March 12th, 1838.*

DEAR SIR:—

The statistical information which you have requested of me, relative to the colored population of Philadelphia, shall be freely given, so far, at least, as my ability and means of obtaining correct data will permit.

In regard to the *increase* of this portion of our population, I am sorry to inform you, that one of its sources, namely, that

from *births*, cannot be correctly estimated, no separate registry of these being kept.

I have, as you are perhaps aware, published two sets of observations upon the increase and mortality of the inhabitants of Philadelphia. In these I have made separate computations for the colored population, the increase of which I have estimated from data furnished by the enumerations made by order of the general government, in the years 1820 and '30.

It is stated by your Committee, charged with investigating the subject, that, according to the census of 1820, there were, within the city and liberties of Philadelphia 10,746 colored persons. This amount differs from that which I have formerly given, as the colored population of the wards and districts. In my enumeration I have perhaps included the inhabitants of some districts adjoining the city, which have been omitted by the Committee. My object was to include, as nearly as possible, the inhabitants of every part making returns of the dead to our Health Office.

The results of my calculations for, and since, 1830, also differ somewhat from those furnished by your Committee, as I estimate the entire colored population of the city and adjoining districts to amount, in 1837, to 17,511, being 1270 persons less than the number stated by the Committee.

In calculating the proportion of the mortality to the population, it is of the utmost importance to have the most exact data on which to found the estimates, and it is on this account that I have devoted much attention to this division of the subject.

Reckoning the colored inhabitants in 1837 at 17,511, the mortality, after deducting 6 per cent. for still-born, is about 1 in 33 annually. Supposing the amount of population as computed by the Committee, the proportional mortality would be about 1 in 35.

In the year 1836, the deaths were 1 in 24 of the colored population; or, according to the rate of increase adopted by the Committee, about 1 in 26.

This result, when compared with those derived from calculations made by me, and embracing the several years between 1820 and '30, shows a remarkable diminution in the mortality of the colored population. In some years,—those of 1821, '23, and '24, for instance,—the deaths were about 1 in 17. The smallest proportion was 1 in 27, and the average



of the 10 years, 1 in 21.7. During the same period, the average mortality among the whites, rich and poor, was 1 in 42.3.

It must be observed that the mortality of the entire population of our city and liberties, has been unusually small for the last two years. In 1836, it fell short of the preceding year 309; and in 1837, the whole mortality was 141 below that of 1836, and, consequently, 550 below that of 1835. Estimating the increase of the white population from the ratio which subsisted between the years 1820 and 1830, namely,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the proportion of deaths in 1837 would be (after deducting the still-born) only about 1 in 54 of all conditions; which is strongly contrasted with that of the colored population for the same year, namely, 1 in 33 or 35.

This high rate of mortality among the colored population, compared to that subsisting among the whites, is calculated to attract the attention of those not much given to the contemplation of human suffering. What, then, must be the impression made by its consideration upon the mind of the active philanthropist? It must, however, be understood, that this comparative exemption from death enjoyed by the white population, is not to be considered as common to all ranks, since there is reason to believe the deaths among the poorest whites fall little short of the proportion in the colored inhabitants. All measures, therefore, which may be contemplated for the amelioration of one class of a suffering community, must be defective in their philanthropic aim, if confined only to one portion of such community.

The particular diseases which prove most destructive to the colored population, are not reported separately in our Bill of Mortality, and can only be ascertained correctly by a laborious examination of the individual certificates furnished the Health Office. Consumption and acute diseases of the chest, are doubtless the most fruitful ordinary sources of death, at least, among adults. In almost every epidemic visitation, it is the colored and poorest portion of the white population, which bear the chief brunt of suffering and mortality.

In the publication made by me relative to the medical statistics of Philadelphia,\* I have endeavored to point out some of the most prominent causes of the increased mortality

\* See American Journal of the Medical Sciences, for 1827 and 1831.

among the poorer classes, and now take the liberty of referring you to the following observations then presented to the public:

“ In a former number of this journal we took some pains to show that the influence of the sickly air was expended upon that comparatively limited portion of the population living in the environs and outskirts of the town. With these, fever, in some of its forms, was almost universal, whilst in the more dense and well paved parts, the air seemed unusually healthy, and where remittents and intermittents were met with, they could almost invariably be traced to exposure to night air in the country or suburbs. Never was a stronger demonstration afforded of the resistance made by cities to the influence of country malaria, than our late experience has furnished. Great as was the amount of sickness, it was confined almost entirely to the comparatively small proportion of population inhabiting the unpaved or ill-paved environs. Our observation on this and other occasions, has led us to ascribe this exemption for the most part to the pavements, which, by effecting a perfect draining, prevents exhalation, at the same time that it admits the total removal of vegetable and animal matters, the sources of foul and unhealthy emanations. The chief motive for paving the streets and side walks, is usually convenience, but it has always appeared to us, that by far the most important object achieved by it was the preservation of health.

Whilst upon the subject of public hygiene, we cannot restrain ourselves from noticing another consideration connected with it, namely, ventilation, or a proper supply of pure unrespired air. By far the greatest proportion of the annual sickness and mortality of ordinary seasons is furnished by the narrow and confined alleys and courts existing in various parts of the town. The low terms upon which the small houses and rooms in such places can be obtained, causes them to be literally crowded with a class of population for the most part negligent of cleanliness, and it can occasion no surprise that there should be a great disparity between the proportions of sickness and mortality among these, compared with that which takes place in the portion living in larger dwellings, having a freer circulation of air. The difference just mentioned, though sufficiently obvious in adults, is most lamentably conspicuous in children. Notwithstanding the great numbers of these which die annually of cholera, we feel ourselves warranted in asserting that deaths from this disease are rare in houses with large and well-aired apartments. To one who, in the capacity of physician to a dispensary or other charity, has been engaged in the arduous duties of attending the poor in their uncomfortable abodes, evidences of our assertions must be abundantly familiar. The numerous instances wherein the mercenary calculations of individuals has tempted them to put up nests of contracted tenements in courts or alleys admitting but little air, and yet subjected to the full influence of heat, has often induced us to wish that there could be some public regulation by which the evil might be checked. Mankind have inhabited cities long enough to know, from severe experience, that there are certain limits to the denseness of population, which, when passed, always lead to disease and mortality. As we think every thing tending to the preservation of public health must be a fit subject for legislation, we do not see why a law should not be procured by which the undue crowding of population might be prevented, and the number and size of

dwellings adjusted to superficial limits. There are at present municipal regulations intended as a protection against conflagration, by designating the materials of which houses shall be constructed; and if such precautions be deemed so important when property is the consideration, of how much more consequence would be those for the preservation of health and life.

It is common to attribute the greater mortality known to take place under ordinary circumstances, in large towns, among the poorer classes, chiefly to meagre or unwholesome food, and immoderate indulgence in strong liquors. But in this country, where, for a part of the year, we are subjected to a degree of heat little, if at all, below that of the tropics, the influence of both these causes in the production of disease, is, in our opinion, insignificant, when compared to that of breathing air that has been previously respired, and which, moreover, is commonly charged with animal and vegetable effluvia. That the same diet and habits of life in the country or small towns, would not be attended with a degree of sickness and mortality corresponding to that found in the crowded portions of large towns, is, we think, beyond doubt.

In Paris, comparisons instituted between the parts chiefly occupied by such as live at ease, with those inhabited by the poorer orders, would seem to show that the proportion of mortality is regulated less by the density of population, than by the opposite circumstances of ease and poverty.\* That this may be the case under the circumstances of climate and means of nourishment, which exist there, we will not pretend to deny; but in this country, where absolute want of food, and that of the best kind, is unknown, the evils of poverty, we are convinced, come from different sources, and more especially from those we have mentioned."

It may be asked, whether any thing may be done through public or private exertions, to diminish the evil influences operating so unfavorably upon the poorer classes? I answer, yes, I think, much. In the first place, as far as public measures can be brought to bear, the authorities should be urged to use their utmost exertions to have the streets and alleys, where the poor dwell, properly regulated, and, when possible, paved, so that the most perfect draining may be effected. Where dryness about the dwellings can be insured, vegetable and animal decomposition is arrested, or carried on slowly, unhealthy emanations are prevented from accumulating, and thus one of the most common predisposing and exciting causes of disease is removed.

In the second place, as we can scarcely hope for the interposition of such municipal regulations as would prevent the

\* The results of the extensive and extremely interesting researches of M. Villot, relative to the changes in the population of Paris, show that the three arrondissements presenting the smallest portion of mortality, namely, an average of one in forty-two of the population per annum, are precisely those recognised as the richest, whilst the three presenting the greatest rate, namely, about one in twenty-five, are noted as the poorest.

undue crowding of streets and dwellings, let those who exert an influence upon the poor, recommend them not to congregate in houses in such numbers as to produce a contamination of the air unfavorable to health. The over crowding of houses, by which a sufficient quantity of fresh air for respiration cannot be obtained, is a most prevailing evil. Persons who live in air more or less vitiated by frequent breathing, may possibly escape disease for a time. Still, they will not have the same strong health, and capacity for exertion, as though they enjoyed a more pure atmosphere. But let sickness once invade a family under such unfavorable circumstances, and the chances of recovery are not only lessened, but, if the disease be of a febrile character, it will be often rendered malignant and contagious.

Upon this head I will relate one of the numerous cases, illustrating the subject, which have come under my own observation. Three or four years since, I was called upon by a very industrious and worthy colored man to visit his sick child, the last left of several that had been born to him. He and his wife were in the greatest tribulation at the prospect of losing their only child. They resided in an upper apartment of a moderate sized dwelling in Elizabeth street. Other rooms of the house were appropriated to a day school, and to the accommodation of another family. I told the anxious parents that it was almost useless for me to prescribe medicine for their child in such a situation, where it was exposed to an atmosphere contaminated by the foul air proceeding in the day from the school-room, and at all times from the family below; and that, if they wished to be healthy themselves and their child, they must seek another dwelling where they could have purer air to breathe. My advice was soon followed, the sick child recovered, and, with other children which now occupy a house sufficiently large in the same street, have since seldom required the advice of a physician. The increased rent is almost paid by the diminished cost of medical attendance, and value of time saved.

I remain, with great respect,

Yours truly,

G. EMERSON.

To Mr. *Edward Needles*.

From the above valuable information derived from Dr. Emerson, it will be perceived, that the apparent disproportion in mortality between white and colored persons, may be

rationally explained by a reference to their peculiar condition in life, attendant upon poverty; and that, in fact, on a comparison between them and the class of whites of the same grade, it is probable scarcely any difference would be discovered in this respect.

We consider this information as an important link in the chain of testimony, whereby the character of this people can be freed from the unjust imputations cast upon them, in as much as it must refute the argument so often advanced, that the increased mortality amongst them arises from their vicious habits, and from self-abuse.

It appears, also, by the observations of Dr. Emerson, that there has been a remarkable diminution in the mortality of the colored inhabitants in 1837, compared with that of preceding years, which, (so far as their condition in life or their habits may operate in producing disease,) would indicate an improvement in these respects.

The important suggestions of Dr. Emerson, in regard to ventilation, and the undue crowding of the population, &c., are well worthy the attention of the Society and of the public.

Since the foregoing was prepared for the press, a friend has put into our hands the *Juvenile Magazine*, published in 1813, by Arthur Donaldson, which contains an account of the schools for colored people, as they were in 1811, and in 1813. Also an account of the religious denominations of colored people, with the number of benevolent institutions, which, as it may be interesting to some of our readers, we have transcribed, to wit:

<i>Schools in 1811.</i>		<i>Schools in 1813.</i>	
Willing's Alley,	104	Willing's Alley,	96
One in Green's Court,	60	Q. Clarkson,	50
One in Sixth st. above South,	20	Solomon Clarkson,	24
One in Lombard above Seventh,	30	J. Gloster,	27
One in Seventh near Shippen,	30	Jane Hut,	22
One in Sixth near South,	20	Ruth Hand,	36
One in Race below Fifth,	20	A. Donalson,	107
A. Donalson,	50	Clarkson Hall, by the Abolition	
One in Cherry Alley,		Society,	52
	334		414

There appears to be only four of the schools originally established for the colored people, which can be fully identified as now in operation; but the number of schools has greatly increased, as will more fully appear by reference to the list of schools, as exhibited at p. 29.

The same writer gives the following account of the places of public worship for the colored people in 1813, with the number of members, to wit:

Episcopal Church, St. Thomas, . . . .	560
Methodist, Bethel, . . . .	1272
Do. Union, under care of Bethel, . . .	74
Do. Zoar meeting, care of St. George's,	80
	<hr/> 1426
First Baptist, between Race and Vine, and 9th and 10th sts.	80
Mount Zion, under care of the Episcopal church, St. John street, near Pegg's run—numbers not stated,	
One Presbyterian church, Seventh street, below Shippen,	300
	<hr/> 2366 members,

by which term, we understand, is included, besides the regular communicants, such orderly persons as frequently attend at worship.

The number of benevolent societies in 1813, by the same authority is stated at 11; aggregate number of members, 500. Some of these societies are still in operation.

Frequent allusion having been made in these Reports, to the agents employed in taking the census, &c., it is deemed proper to introduce them more particularly to the favorable notice of the Society.

The chief agent employed by the Committee, was Benjamin C. Bacon, a very worthy and highly respectable man, who having been much employed in business nearly similar, was found to be admirably qualified for the service; and the fidelity and judicious manner in which he performed the arduous duties of his appointment was very satisfactory to the Committee. His assistant, Charles W. Gardner, a very intelligent and respectable colored clergyman, pastor of a Presbyterian congregation, also performed the part in which he was engaged to our satisfaction. And we have much pleasure in thus testifying our confidence in the general accuracy of the returns they made upon the numerous subjects of inquiry to which their attention was directed.

The Committee have now presented the result of their labors, so far as completed. They believe, however, that a wide field is still opened for further services, should it be the pleasure of the Society to continue them.

Respectfully submitted.

JOSEPH PARRISH, M. D., *Chairman,*

EDWARD NEEDLES, *Secretary of the Committee.*











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